1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

643 common at African courts. A few Umbundu rulers carried on
692 such practices, and especially certain self-constituted robber-barons such as Samakaka, who left Viye after the military occupation and established himself first in Bimbe (Mbimbi), later in Huambo (Wambu), and then at Elende, until taken by the Portuguese authorities in 1903.

643 4. In order to protect himself and the nation, *the king had resort*
754 *to magical means*, some of which would be accounted witchcraft or murder if practised without authority. Such were the ritual murders of *Katōkōlā* (The Strangler), *Oku ipa ukaï watimba avali* (killing the woman of two bodies, i.e. pregnant), of the children whose lives were required for building and furnishing the queen's kitchen, &c.

791 5. In order properly to carry out the functions of his office, *the*
643 *king made much use of divination*, for which purpose he had his own diviner (*Citue cosoma*), who was of the blood royal. He also called in or consulted diviners of many regions and of many types, one of the commonest of which was the 'Diviner of the Basket' (*Ocimbanda congombo*).[1]

643 The king was a divine representative and a divine incarnation,
642 but the mode of his succession reveals that he was also a democratically chosen leader. Note has been made of the fact that the royal succession is in the male line, sometimes from father to son, but more often from elder to younger brother, to brother's son, or to one even more distantly related. The election is made by the councillors whose duty it is, ordinarily before the old king's death is announced, but these same councillors may depose an unpopular
[669] king. There have been many revolutions and *coups d'état*. This fact was noted by several early observers, among whom I cite one who wrote in 1837:

> The government of 'Bailundo' is democratic. These heathen mix with the infamous humiliations of the orientals, the unbridled coarseness of the English people at election times in England. The kings defer to and flatter their counsellors; these are they who elevate a king to the throne and also who cast him down.[2]

[1] A rather cursory description of divination as practised by this type of diviner was given by Hambly, op. cit., pp. 274–6. For a fuller treatment, *vide* L. S. Tucker, 'The Divining Basket of the Ovimbundu', *J.R.A.I.* (London), 1940, vol. lxx, pp. 171–201.

[2] C. de Almeida Sandoval in *Annaes do Cons. Ultr.*, Ser. I, p. 519. The reference to English elections reminds one of Dickens. See also P. M. Pinheiro de

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601 III. TABLES OF RELATIVES WITH WHOM MARRIAGE IS PREFERRED

A. *Of Ego's Generation: Either Man or Woman*

Term	*Relationship*	*Reciprocal term*
Epalume or *cepua*	cross-cousins of all degrees (see list Table I. A. 4, p. 47)	*epalume* or *cepua*

B. *Of First Ascendant Generation: Man Speaking*

Tatekãi	father's 'sister' (see list Table I. D. 4, p. 48)	*ocimumba*

C. *Of First Ascendant Generation: Woman Speaking*

Manu	mother's 'brothers' (see list Table I. D. 3, p. 48)	*ocimumba*

D. *Of First Descendant Generation: Man or Woman Speaking*

Ocimumba	mother's 'brother's' or father's 'sister's grandchild'	*manu* or *tatekãi*

591 582 Many writers have noted that, among other purposes, the financial arrangements serve to give the bride a status in the village of her husband. In a system of preferential kinship marriage, this is a desideratum, although for other reasons than those operating in a system where the wife comes as a comparative stranger. In a system such as this of the Ovimbundu, it is evident that many of the relatives by marriage are already blood relatives. This is perhaps one reason why the avoidances with regard to 'in-laws' are less rigidly held to than in a society such as the Zulu, which holds strictly to exogamous marriage.[1]

182 601 Another factor which makes for stability of marriage is the bilineal kinship system (*epata*). This system offers to the wife an initial security not usually found where descent is unilineal, or even where there has been a one-sided development of one line of descent at the expense of the other. The bilineal system is an important factor in the preservation of social stability. Through it the household and the village are links in the chain which even yet binds the Ovimbundu into a social whole.

Sorcery

182 754 Umbundu society is subject to various forces which threaten its cohesion and stability both from without and from within. Some of the external forces have been touched upon.[2] Chief of the

[1] Krige, op. cit., p. 29 f.

[2] *Supra*, pp. v, 26.

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internally disruptive forces is sorcery. It is apparently on the increase among the Ovimbundu, a tendency which has also been reported from other parts of Africa.[1] The extent to which sorcery operates within the kinship groups themselves makes its influence even more dangerous to social cohesion.

Any marked success achieved by an individual, especially when such success has been achieved by an individual alone or in partnership, but not in co-operation with a number of persons, often brings on suspicion of sorcery.[2] Should the results of such success be distributed widely and freely within the family or kinship group, suspicion of sorcery is less likely to arise and open accusation may be avoided. Grudges, however, whether newly built up or inherited, often find expression in suspicion or in open accusation of sorcery.[3] An open accusation of sorcery (*oku sunga ovanga*) is a very serious matter and will not often be made lightly.

Such accusations are made both within and across kinship lines. Affinal relatives are quite often accused of sorcery, and suspicion frequently rests upon wives whose kinship connexions are in distant regions. Predilection for and skill in the use of sorcery is supposed to be inherited. A reputation for sorcery may be imputed to a family through a number of generations.

Somewhat less overt accusations of sorcery are made at the inquest during a funeral. The corpse in its coffin slung to a pole between two carriers responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative), or backward (negative) movements. It may also cause its carriers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, meaning that one of the occupants of the house is thereby accused of having caused the death. Traditionally such accusations during inquests were exceedingly common, perhaps even usually expected.[4] Should the corpse not give a clear answer, then subsequent divination would often bring out an accusation of sorcery. Accusations such as these, involving responsibility for the death of a person, are usually made *within* the body of blood or affinal kin.

When sorcery is consciously taken up and employed, the purpose is usually economic advancement, but it often involves overt

[1] Cf. B. Malinowski, in *Africa*, 1939, p. 39.
[2] *Vide infra*, pp. 107 ff.
[3] *Vide infra*, p. 125.
[4] For an early observation of this (*c.* 1790) *vide Annaes Mar. e Col.*, 3a Ser., p. 489 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

attacks also upon the persons or possessions of enemies. This type of sorcery in a very common form involves the enslavement of the spirit of another person, often a child of one's own family or kin.[1] The person whose spirit is used may be killed either by violent or by magical means. Sorcery of this type is much feared, but if wealth supposedly gained by this means is used for the benefit of the kin, the sorcerer may be tolerated or even protected in the exercise of his black art. Beneficiaries do not often have qualms concerning the source of the benefits received. One who, by reason of his family connexions or his own power, has secured a strong position may escape interference. Jealousy or grudges, however, often bring out accusations from within the circle of kin. Accusations may also be made by outsiders. With the decline in influence which the tribal courts have suffered, and their inability to inflict capital punishment, sorcery is less frequently punished than formerly. The consequent reductions in the number of innocent victims is a gain. This same cause has operated, however, to increase dealings in, and fear of, sorcery. Most of the cases brought to European courts, and even to the Church, under the name of 'poisoning' are in reality accusations of sorcery.

In the foregoing brief note it has not been possible adequately to treat the subject, but it will be seen that sorcery has long been a divisive influence in Umbundu life. It sometimes seriously affects the cohesion of the household and the larger kinship groups. Economic, political, and other forces now seem to be acting to increase the incidence of sorcery, the influence of which is probably a considerable factor in the present rapid disintegration of the Umbundu social structure.

The Hierarchy of Age

Passing references have been made to associations of coevals. The Ovimbundu recognize very definitely the hierarchy of age and consider orderly society quite impossible without it. One of the keenest criticisms of the European and his ways is contained in the aphorism:

Kundele ka ku li ukulu.
In 'civilization' there is no senior.

To Umbundu wisdom this is an impossible state of affairs;

[1] The Umbundu term is *oku andeka*; *vide ref. infra*, p. 107, n. 1.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

182 621 in a somewhat decadent state, the Umbundu village has up to the present maintained its status as a local kinship unit.

182 592 602 The household is not a solitary unit but a part of the village. Since it is constituted by marriage, it embodies the union of at least two kinship groups. The attitudes and behaviour patterns within the Umbundu household are basically those universally recognized. In common with the households of most Bantu cultures, it differs from the European model in that it extends its attitudes and behaviour patterns to the wider kinship groupings by means of a classificatory system of relationship.

613 182 In the wider kinship groupings (*epata*), the Ovimbundu recognize both the maternal (*olusina*) and the paternal (*olue*) lines of descent. The functions of the latter have been largely local, residential, social, and religious, with succession (of status) in the male line. The function of the former has been cohesive over a larger territory, with a recognized head in whom has been vested both religious and economic functions. Both his office and the inheritance of property descend in the female line. Much of the power, economic and personal, formerly held by the *olusina*, in the person of the mother's brother, seems to be passing at the present time to the *olue*, in the person of the father. The bilineal kinship system has been a strongly cohesive social force.

182 [582] The form of marriage practised by the Ovimbundu is of the two-way cross-cousin type in both lines of kin and in three generations. It seems to be an individual type developed in the particular social and economic situation of the Ovimbundu. As a contract between two families and as a new venture, the marriage relation demands that great attention be given to attitudes and behaviour patterns which emphasize mutual respect.

[641] The hierarchy of age is a very real factor in the Umbundu social structure. Age-set 'schools' have not existed generally throughout the tribes, but there are associations of coevals. This is largely a cohesive force.

754 Sorcery is the most important disruptive force at work within Umbundu society. Working as it does, within kinship groups, and inasmuch as it seems to be on the increase, sorcery embodies a real danger to social cohesion.

184 178 Homogeneity has never been an attribute of the Ovimbundu as regards their racial or cultural make-up. The slave-trade injected other and more diverse elements, and recent movements and

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1960) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

844 husband's mother (whether uterine or classificatory) to attend the labour of her daughter-in-law. The husband does not attend. As Mr. Hambly's informant phrased it, 'The child would be ashamed to be born.'[1] It seems that the husband's non-attendance may be
845 connected with the danger to him of the blood.[2] No other man will be present unless delayed labour entails the intervention of a medical practitioner, especially a diviner. Resort will not be had to outside aid until it seems impossible otherwise for the child to be born, and nowadays even where modern medical aid is available, often it will only be resorted to after the woman has been in labour for more than twenty-four hours[3]—sometimes much more, and then when it is already too late. Difficult delivery may be caused by:

(*a*) *Broken taboos*, as, for example, theft, either by the mother or the father. Only after confession can someone go out and steal something, after which the child 'consents' to be born.

(*b*) *Adultery* on the part of the mother, which must be confessed before the child will 'consent' to be born. The father's adultery may also cause trouble at this time, but this is more often believed to be the cause of a disease in his offspring known as *onjamba*. Failing confession of the above faults, a diviner may be called, but his diagnosis may more often indicate

(*c*) *Sorcery*, to which difficult labour, along with many other ills of life, may be attributed.[4]

(*d*) It is also believed that in some cases a woman may herself refuse to give birth and may extend her pregnancy far beyond the nine months' period, the limits of which, and its method of reckoning, are not understood. Such cases as

[1] Hambly, op. cit., p. 183.

[2] Among church-members the husband often attends the birth and is sometimes the only attendant.

[3] A labour of twelve or fourteen hours is considered quite usual, and a shorter one as light.

754 [4] Sorcery, together with ill will and anger recognized as its principal roots, are great dangers to a woman giving birth. Anyone who dislikes the woman in labour, or even one who has ever shown ill will against her, will stay strictly away from the birth. While a woman is in labour all women of the village are expected to stay at home and refrain from ordinary activities—to commune with the spirits. As one of many proverbs has it: *Uhamo ndo o cita, vu ndolo:* ndo *cita hakuwa, ndo cita hawa*; 'Your fellow, if she gives birth, you stay in: childbirth of your fellow, is childbirth of yours.'

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children may have enough food. Therefore while parents have their children with them, they teach them, saying, Let us work that we may have much food, for if a person lacks food he will die of hunger, or perhaps he may steal from another's field and get into trouble. Children must be diligent in working.

'But should a parent have a child who does not want to work, the parent may beat that child to teach him sense lest he may be a sluggard (ocinshi).[1] Parents have a proverb saying,

U wa ku vetele[2] *kepia,*
He who you beat in the field
ka ku vetele,
did not you punish
wa ku kwipisa olondunge.
he you taught sense.

'Before beginning, parents always encourage their children to work. Cultivation, however, is not counted as a profession (*ocipinduko*). Should a person cultivate a great deal so that from his field he has very much food, then people will take notice and say, So-and-so has enslaved a spirit[3] to the seeds, he has spirits (*ikili*) and they are helping him. That causes great fear, for people fear (those who) have spirits.[5] Thus, even though a person should purpose to teach another how to cultivate in order to have much food, the other will only apparently agree[6] because of his fear. Therefore the work of cultivation is not sought after as a profession by children, for they say, Being a farmer (*ongunja*)[7] is the work of sorcerers (*olongunjo*) and not of ordinary people.'[8]

[1] *Vetele* is the relative mood (or form) of the verb *oku veta*. There is a pun in its use here since it is also used with *epia* in the sense of breaking ground for a new field.

[2] The verb used here—*oku endeka, endekula*—means securing the services of a person's spirit by killing the person (whether by witchcraft or by actual violence). The person is often a child and often of one's own family. In some cases parts of the body are said to have been kept for subsequent ritual use, e.g. bones and flesh dried and ground for 'fertilizer', or the skull for a drinking-cup. It will be seen that this is sorcery. The reflexive form of this verb, *oku liendeka*, means to form a blood-brotherhood, but it is a sorcerer's pact involving the sacrifice of a third person.

[3] The expression used means either to have or to have the reputation for having.

[4] He agrees with *ocanyo*, a term commonly translated as 'irony' or 'contempt'.

[5] This is the term which we commonly use for 'farmer'. Its connotation should be understood.

[6] This section is translated from a manuscript by Raul Kavita Evambi of Chyaka.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

556 578 472 The attitude toward success in agriculture indicated by the foregoing is held in some measure toward marked success in other professions, but in lesser degree, except perhaps where trading is taken up individually or by two persons in partnership. One of the earliest observers, Pinheiro de Lacerda (*c.* 1790), noted that accusations of witchcraft were most often levelled at the wealthier members of the community.[1] This fear of success has continued down to the present day, but while trading was an open group enterprise in which many individuals acquired wealth, success in that field came to be accepted more quickly than in the more individualistic work of farming. At the present time, commercial activities are carried on largely by individuals alone or in a limited partnership, and the practice, or at least the suspicion, of witchcraft in connexion with them seems to be on the increase. Some may feel that similar attitudes with regard to successful results from cultivation of the soil are now held less strongly than formerly, but [754] I know of no evidence to support such a feeling. One of the commonest traditional patterns for witchcraft is that of a partnership of a senior and a junior member—of parent and child, or of mother's brother and sister's son. That is one reason why urgent suggestions by an older person concerning choice of a profession by a younger are looked upon with disfavour among the Ovimbundu.

868 562 A child should be taught enough diligence and application in cultivating that he or she may not lack the necessities in later adult life. Every boy will take to trading and bargaining almost as naturally as eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Commerce still retains so much of its former glamour that every boy will take it up if and when opportunity offers. The care of younger children comes even more naturally to the girl, and she must also learn the housekeeper's art. Many folk-tales and songs indicate a reluctance on the part of girls to dedicate themselves with diligence to cultivation. In the days of the rubber trade, when girls could also join caravans for the coast and to the interior as porters, there may have been some real basis for this, but at the present time girls are convinced and enthusiastic cultivators, almost 100 per cent.[2] The

[1] *Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes*, 3a Ser., p. 489 f.

[2] Women coming to live in the coast towns or in other European settlements where they have no fields or gardens find adjustment to life without agricultural labours very difficult.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

797 795 produced an Umbundu grammar,[1] but does not seem to have published material of an ethnological nature. Père Keiling (who died in 1937) and Père Batteix were both listed in *Le Répertoire Africain* as specializing in the 'Ganguella' language.[2] The Umbundu missions of this Diocese date from 1890 (Caconda), 1896 (Bailundo), 1912 (Cuando), and later. From early days this mission has had quite evident political aspects—from 1889 when a military expedition was sent against the 'Ganguella Soba[3] Tchiuaco' to re-establish Père Lecomte and the Cubango mission station which had been attacked and expelled,[4] up to the recent government charters and mission statutes, which heavily subsidize the religious work of the Roman Catholic missions in Angola. The constitution of the Portuguese Republic decrees the separation of Church and State and full religious liberty. The large subsidies and other special privileges given to the Roman Catholic Church in Angola, however, create difficulties beyond the mere allocation of tax-money. In other parts of Africa the Roman Catholic missions co-operate with the Protestant in many spheres of action. It is to be regretted that such co-operation seems not to be desired in Angola. Is it a sort of monopolistic political aim which keeps the Roman Catholic missionaries of Angola aloof? The rare instances in which a more friendly spirit has been manifested only add point to the question. The appreciative and co-operative spirit shown by Padre J. Alves Correia[5] may be cited.

797 178 754 Roman Catholics and Protestants have both been very successful from a numerical standpoint.[6] Success in building a truly indigenous Church, or in providing it with suitable and capable leadership from its own ranks, is another question hardly to be judged from statistics. More elusive still is the question whether,

[1] *Boletim Soc. Geog. Lisboa*, 1897. This grammar has gone through several editions and is still in use. The orthography is evidently intended to facilitate the use of the language by one whose native tongue is French and rather complicates matters for an African, and, indeed, for anyone whose language is other than French.

[2] H. Dubois, op. cit., p. 340.

[3] *Soba*, a native chief (from *Sousa*).

[4] *Ganguella*, op. cit., 1891, pp. 10 ff.

[5] See his books, *A Lavoura do Reino de Deus* (Lisbon, 1932); *A Vida Mais Alta*, &c.

[6] Roman Catholics have about 180,000 and Protestants about 140,000 adherents among the Ovimbundu, according to the census taken in 1940 (Colónia de Angola, *Censo Geral da População*, vol. iv; Luanda, Imprensa Nacional, 1943).

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or how far, Umbundu life may have been actually penetrated by a Christian spirit in matters of faith and morals. It is not surprising that after less than seventy years, or very much less in most regions, belief in witchcraft should still have a strong hold upon the minds of the Ovimbundu. Somewhat disturbing, however, is the fact that according to the latest observations, belief in and the hold of witchcraft seem at the present time to be increasing. These observations tally with what seems to be taking place in other parts of Africa.[1] According to observers in Africa and in other parts of the world the hold of witchcraft upon a people seems to increase with a decrease of security, whether relating to the economic basis of life, to health and disease, or to life's religious undergirding. In such a case, it is clearly the duty of all agencies concerned to co-operate for the removal of the cause of insecurity. Here the chief agencies are government, commerce, and missions. It is to be hoped that for the good of the Ovimbundu they may be brought together.

[1] See *Africa*, vol. viii, no. 4, which number is devoted to studies of witchcraft. See especially the article, 'A Modern Movement of Witch Finders', by A. I. Richards, pp. 418 ff.

769 They intimate their wishes to their descendants only through slight illness, usually asking for honour to be paid to them by a feast, or by some descendant carrying on their profession.

Ocanda is the spirit of the much-honoured founder of the family,(1) and is always beneficent, bringing good fortune and warning his descendants of danger. Hambly and Tucker agree that *Ekiri* is the same kind of spirit as *Ocanda* (although Hambly does not give *Ocanda* this special meaning). Tucker writes that *Ekiri* is a benevolent spirit who calls the villagers together at night, and gives them advice through a medium (?), whom he enters without the latter's going into the usual trance. *Kandanda* according to Tucker is an *ekiri* who holds the leading position among the ancestral spirits owing to his seniority. Hambly describes a shrine to *Kandanda* at Bailundo; anyone who sees the contents of the shrine is supposed to become blind. He writes that *Kandanda* is thought of as "the spirit of dreaming who makes swellings on the body", but gives no further explanation. According to Tucker *Kandanda* is an especially powerful *ombala*, and ceremonies performed for him have many distinctive features.

776 769 (578)

224 776 778 (552) *Hunt*, the spirit of the hunt, has his own shrine and priest in the village of the (permanent?) chief. His hut is very large, since all the meat of the hunts is placed in it. In front of it dances are held, and poles are decorated with shells and other trophies of hunting. Before the door there is a carved figure of *Samanda*, the spirit who chases the game towards the hunter. A man whose ritual name is *Kapila*, and a woman called *Kunja*(?) are in charge of the spirit-hut of *Hunt*, and make supplication to him for success in hunting. Hunters living elsewhere but in an *ombala* or head village do not have persons bearing these ritual names, but their dogs are often called *Hunt*, *Samanda*, *Kapila* or *Kunja*.

775 759

The most dreaded spirits are the *otalupakupaku*, who may be spirits of still-born babies or foetuses, mental defectives, maltreated slaves, or persons, especially children, killed by sorcery. When a person has been found guilty of killing a child by sorcery or witchcraft, he is sentenced to "restore life" to it, which he does by substituting for it a child from his own family; if the deceased child is a girl, he must give an ox as well. The child is treated with great respect by his new family. If however the parents do not ask the sorcerer or witch for restitution, the child becomes an *otalupakupaku*, and may return to "eat" other children, at the command of the sorcerer who has killed it.

RITUAL

793 613

It has been noted that the village headman acts as priest for the clans, the group of paternally-related persons who form the basis of the village group, while the head of the clanns acts as priest for his dispersed, maternally-related group.(3) There is little detailed information on the religious duties of these priests. Cushman(4) describes the village headman as making public prayers each morning to *Suku*. Childs however points out(5) that it is more usual for the headman to spend a

(1) i.e. of either the clans or the clains. (Childs, personal communication)
(2) According to Childs, (1949, p.21) *Kunja* is a hunting goddess.
(3) See above, p.28.
(4) 1944, p.51. (5) Personal communication.

787 A detailed description of the procedure of divining is given by Tucker. In brief, the basket (ongombo), which contains a wide variety of objects, is ritually prepared, and the diviner goes into a kind of trance which calls the spirit of the basket to him. As he starts shaking the basket, he asks it first why the clients have come to him (since they may not ask him directly), and when he has ascertained this, questions the spirit about the cause of the trouble. The chanted replies of the audience (consisting, apparently, of outsiders as well as the clients) assist him in making the divination. The divination is finally given from the juxtaposition of the objects which settle on top of the pile in the basket.(1)

[841] Especial care is taken of the divining basket when not in use. Some diviners build a special *etumbo* or spirit-hut for the basket; others keep it hidden in their own house, where it may be seen only by the wife of the diviner, and only when she is not menstruating. Tucker gives a long description of the contents of the divining basket and illustrations of some of the objects.

791 At the death of a diviner, his son inherits the ongombo, but only if he can master the secrets of the basket and pass the tests which are given during his initiation into the profession. In addition, he must be "called" by some omen or illness which a diviner interprets as the wish of an ancestral spirit that he should become a diviner.(2) If he does not have these qualifications, the basket goes to someone who does, and the son receives no recompense. In either case, two years of training are usual for the would-be diviner, during which he is apprenticed to an established member of the profession. In this period he may learn ovihemba (medicines); their preparation and their uses to cure or kill. [754] In order to provide the female counterpart to the spirit of the divining basket, he might formerly invite a girl to spend the night with him. In the morning, he gave her a magically treated cloth which caused her illness and death; her spirit would then be able to assist the one he already had.

The olosakulo or "servants of the basket" are youths who carry the accoutrements of the ocimbanda and wait on him; they also provide their master with much information about the community, and during divination closely observe the clients and assist the ocimbanda by shouting loudly when he has made the right answer. They are also believed to have mystic powers, e.g. to see and reveal what is going on at a distance, or to go into a trance during which the spirit of the basket may speak through their lips instead of through the basket. Tucker gives no information concerning the identity of these boys; possibly they are the diviner's apprentices, although she does not suggest this.

787 "The Ocimbanda refer all communications from the spirit world, whether by omen, portent or illness, to an ocimbanda....The requisite behaviour is determined according to the answer given by the combination of pieces in the ongombo [divining basket], which is thus the key to the

(1) The contents of the basket and the ritual which surrounds it appear to be almost identical with the practice of the eastern neighbours of the Ovimbundu described in another section of the Survey. (McCulloch, 1951, pp.91-2)

(2) It is not very clear whether the spirit of the basket is that of its former owner, or whether it is some non-ancestral spirit.

whole supernatural world... The divining basket is the concrete medium through which the spirits reveal their will to their descendants on earth, and warn them of dangers, human or supernatural".(1)

SORCERERS AND WITCHES

Sorcerers and witches are not clearly distinguished. Both are called olongonga, and have powers over one or more malignant spirits whom they can send anywhere to kill, steal, or torment. These "familiar spirits" are sometimes called otalo olumbo, and are held responsible for all mysterious disappearances of maize, beans and other possessions, as well as for many illnesses and deaths. Some sorcerers are said to own small images which they send out at night. Others are said to dance naked at night at the door of the intended victim's house. When sorcery involves killing by physical means, portions of the victim's body may be used to make "medicine" or charms.(2)

A person may be a sorcerer without knowing it, and may deny it when accused by the diviner. If he does so, he and his accuser undergo the cubulango (poison test),(3) to discover who is in the right.(4) Concerning accusation of sorcery, Childs writes "Any marked success ... by an individual, especially when such success has been achieved by an individual alone or in partnership, but not in co-operation with a number of persons, often brings on suspicion of sorcery. Should the results of such success be distributed widely....suspicion is less likely to arise.....An open accusation of sorcery (oku sunga owunga) is a very serious matter and will not often be made lightly. Such accusations are made both within and across kinship lines. Affinal relatives are quite often accused of sorcery, and suspicion frequently rests upon wives whose kinship connections are in distant regions..."(5)

The tendency or aptitude for sorcery is supposed to be inherited by a daughter, or a son, or a nephew from the mother, uterine or classificatory, from the mother's brother etc. It is said that older relatives take younger ones as apprentices and partners.(6) The sin of a person who convinously takes up sorcery is said usually to be economic advancement. A very common form involves the enslavement of the spirit of another person, often a child of one's own family or kin group; the victim may be killed by either physical or magical means. Childs points out that sorcery is one of the greatest internally disruptive forces within the kin group and social system of the Ovimbundu. He notes that jealousy and grudges often bring accusations from within the circle of kin, but does not describe what happens when the charges have been made and verified. Especially in view of his statement that economic, political and other forces now seem to be acting to increase the incidence of sorcery,(7) it would be interesting to have information concerning its possible connection with segmentation of lineages or village groups, or its relation to tensions between the paternal and maternal groups of relatives.

(1) Tucker, op.cit., p.301.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) The cubulango is administered by the medicine-man, and causes sickness but not death. See Tucker, op.cit., and Hambly, (2) 1934, p.205.
(4) Tucker, op.cit.
(5) Childs, 1949, p.57.
(6) Childs, personal communication.
(7) Childs, 1949, p.58.

885 and stability of his personality (uno - lit. the quality of being a person) is only proved when he enters the state of adulthood at marriage.

DEATH

361 764 Each village has its own burial ground about a mile or so away. The grave is usually dug by the children of the father's sister.(1) The corpse of a commoner is bound in a supine position and placed in a box before interment. It is usual during the funeral to find out the cause of death, i.e. whether it is the work of spirits or of some living enemy. Accusations of sorcery are frequently made. The corpse in its coffin, slung to a pole between two carriers, responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative) or backward (negative) movements.(2) In the case described by Hambly,(3) the questions were put by the father's sister. The corpse may also cause its bearers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, thereby indicating that one of the occupants has caused its death.(4) Should the corpse not give a clear answer, the diviner might be called in to discover the cause of the death. Accusations of sorcery, as has been noted above, are often made within the circle of kin.(5)

• 858

Special cases

766 For children the same ceremony was carried out if they were old enough to walk and talk. Otherwise the diviner's services were called upon by the parents. At the death of twins, the mother has to shake a rattle or blow a horn instead of giving the usual greetings to passers-by, as she had to do also while the children were alive.(6)

766 791 At the death of *diviners* and medicine-men other members of the profession take charge of the ceremonies. The corpse is tied in a sitting posture and kept thus for three days before burial. No coffin is used. The questioning ceremony is carried out as for a commoner. After the interment the other medicine-men dance "because they have spirit in their heads", and during the dance each eats a living chicken that he carries in his hand. At the side of the grave a dog, a chicken and a goat are killed, and eaten by the mourners. The *ocisanda*'s power is apparently thought to linger round the grave, which the chief or village-headman may visit to ask for rain and other favours.(7)

229 766 *Hunters* at death are buried in rock tombs (*ombilia* or *ocanje*), which are usually placed in commanding positions. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on top of the tomb. The bows of the deceased hunter are kept in his successor's "house of bows".

766 693 000 *Chiefs*, and possibly also village *headmen*, are buried in specially-constructed enclosures in the villages over which they ruled. The tomb is a small hut with a substantial wooden door, which is surrounded by a strongly-built wooden fence, or it may be a cave. The wives of the chief are buried in the same enclosure. The head of a specially selected

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.268.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.57.
(3) Op.cit., p.266.
(4) Childs, loc.cit.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.268.
(7) Ibid., p.270.

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

462 be reversed and asked whether men could not carry the water. I was told
331 that such a man would be laughed at and called a "he-woman." Yet division of labor does not imply sex inferiority, and ridicule would arise from incongruity.

MEDICINE-MEN

759 The training of a medicine-man (ocimbanda) and a medicine-woman
791 (chambula) involves few formalities, but this class of work requires that a novice shall have "spirit in the head." When visited by a sick boy the medicine-man shakes his divination basket and if a certain combination of objects appears, he says, "Your father was ocimbanda and his spirit wants you." The boy who is thus adopted has to accompany the medicine-man, his master, carrying apparatus and standing near to play a small friction drum while the master is shaking his divination basket.

Specialization among medicine-men is carried to great degree of refinement, especially among those practitioners who profess therapeutic knowledge. I employed three medicine-men to collect plants, of which they appeared to have an expert knowledge. Umbundu names were given and the curative properties of each plant were explained with enthusiasm and evident conviction. The men were undoubtedly sincere in their own beliefs. A specialist who can cure blood in the urine, and another who is said to treat dizziness successfully, are greatly respected. The rainmaker is ocimbanda opulia, "the medicine-man of the rain," who dances while flourishing a cow-tail switch, and blowing a shrill whistle intermittently.

Ocimbanda is of course distinguished from onganga, since the former is concerned with socially beneficent tasks such as those mentioned, while
● [759] the latter may cause sickness, impotence, and sterility. In earlier days the task of finding sorcerers (ongangs) by use of the poison ordeal was that of an ocimbanda. Medicine-women are called in to take care of difficult cases of childbirth, and I have seen a medicine-woman painting the face of a pregnant woman, who thereafter observed certain taboos.

Space will not permit enumeration of the contents of a divination basket and the significance attached to each item; neither can I give details of ceremonies for curing the sick or bringing a thief back to the village, but the foregoing notes suffice to show that the craft is specialized and still important. A medicine-man ceremonially washes a king or chief on rare occasions. He makes new fire by twirling; though flint and steel, also
[782] matches, are known. When a new village is founded a medicine-man stirs the blood of sacrificed animals with the claws of a chicken; then he sprinkles this blood on each new house.

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journeys diminished in distance as they increased in profitability.[53]

My informants, however, gave a somewhat different picture. Long trading journeys were still being undertaken in the last decade of the trade (1901–11). Some men whom I met had travelled to the kingdom of the Mwata Yamvo and beyond to Luba country; one man had made a journey into what is now the Congo Republic which took a year to go and a year to return; another had visited Barotseland. It should be said that these seem to have been unusually long journeys; journeys totalling six to eight months were common.[54]

The significance of the trade in social life is reflected in the mystical explanations of success in business found in Umbundu religion. Prosperity might be explained either by the favour of spirits such as Kandundu and Otjipukû, who received at their shrines libations of wine, or by malevolent sorcery involving the sacrifice of relatives in exchange for wealth.[55] The existence of these two explanations probably reflects the existence of some rich men who satisfied the expectations of their relatives and others who did not.

Apart from the rubber trade, the older slave trade continued until its vigorous suppression in the period 1910–12, and indeed seems, as regards the Ovimbundu, to have become intensified in the period after 1890. The slaves went to S. Tome and Principe, or to coastal plantations. Up to that time the Ovimbundu had sold few of their own people, with the exception of criminals or people who had become generally unpopular with their kin. The collapse of the old political system played into the hands of adventurers who unscrupulously exploited the Umbundu custom of debt slavery or conducted raids for this purpose.[56]

It was then the 'trade' which was the common factor in the life of all Ovimbundu, and which was so to speak the factor,

[53] Childs, p. 208.

[54] Informants.

[55] Although some old men still have shrines to the luck-giving spirits it is not possible to see how their cult functioned in the social structure then existing. It is, however, notable that success could be interpreted mystically in two ways by benevolent spirits or by sorcery.

[56] Childs, p. 213. I was told that Cuemba had been raided from Bailundo.

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could be resolved in the matrilineal group.[78] Hastings, who gives the most detailed account of the matrilineal groups, which he calls sibs, tells us, 'There can be no exaction of fines or taking of slaves between the members of a sib group—the group members are supposed to pay each other's debts, and one who has wealth and refuses so to communicate may be secretly poisoned by the others. It is within the group of matrilineal sibs that most compacts, whether social or economic, are formed and operate. The same is true even of malevolent plots and anti-social practices, such as killing by witchcraft.'[79]

Clearly, the matrilineal groups in which the rich had to pool their wealth with poorer kinsfolk and in which trading arrangements[80] were made indicate the adaptation of the kinship system to the needs of the trade. It may be suggested that one of the functions of the double descent system was to separate the fields of village and chiefdom relations, established through patrilineal ties, from the field of commerce, credit, and the inheritance of wealth gained by trade. Thus the conflicts in which a man would be involved in one set of relations would not involve his other set of ties, and this distribution of stresses must have limited the strains set up by disputes. The distinction between the local group and the commercial group would also prevent heavy losses from trade striking a whole village simultaneously.[81] The credit institutions demanded by a trading system in which debt was frequently incurred were fitted into the kinship system, and associated with a device for levelling those who had become prosperous in the trade.

Unhappily the disintegration of the traditional social structure, and the accompanying loss of knowledge of it, prevented me from adding to, or even corroborating entirely, the written material on the form of the matrilineal groups.[82] It is not at all evident how the groups maintained integration, or how new

[78] Hambly, p. 200.

[79] Ibid., p. 92.

[80] Dr. Childs suggested to me that the core of the caravans might be composed of kin. However, the caravans were so large that they clearly could not be organized on a kinship basis. See also Serpa Pinto, p. 165.

[81] This point was suggested to me by Dr. Mary Douglas.

[82] I did not obtain any information on the size of the matrilineal group, the existence of heads of the groups, and the degree to which it was a congregation.

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groups emerged. The information on the cult of the matrilineal spirits which might have thrown some light on matrilineal conflicts and integration, is confused. Both Hastings and Mrs. Tucker state that the matrilineal spirits are always malevolent, but this is not confirmed by my informants,[83] and it may be that they were referring to the traditional belief that sorcery was only practised between members of a matrilineal group. Although, as has been stated, a man looked to his matrilineal kin for economic aid, he might travel with his father (who had first claim on his services), or with his mother's brother or some other kinsman; indeed while his father was still alive he might travel and trade on his own account.[84] The matrilineal group (in this area at least) was not a unit from which trading teams were formed, but rather a means for providing financial assistance when needed for those engaged in trading. It is of course possible that in some areas of Umbundu country the matrilineal kin groups were significant in the organization of trading caravans.

Another institution whose form can be described but whose function cannot be properly known is that of preferential marriage with certain categories of kin. Childs states that the categories were cross-cousins (both patrilateral and matrilateral), the sister's daughter, and the father's sister, and indicates that the cross-cousin marriages were not generally with first-cousins. My informants generally denied that it had been permitted to marry a father's sister, but confirmed his other statements. They added that an indemnification was paid by the bridegroom to the bride's family 'to cut the blood',[85] and that the kinship terms were replaced by affinal. This suggests that these marriages may have been intended to restore distant kinship ties by turning them into affinal ties and so renewing them for the next generation, but how this would operate cannot even be guessed.

[83] Hastings, p. 87; L. S. Tucker, 'The Divining Basket of the Ovimbundu', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1940, pp. 171–201.

[84] Informants.

[85] This was paid down to 1949 or so in the area where I was. It was about 20 escudos, much less than bridewealth. It was formerly referred to by the Umbundu term for 'fine' (*oimbe*), as was the payment made on the death of a non-kinswoman wife.

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become *inakulu* (queen) because she feared the unpleasant haunting by the spirits of former queens which is traditionally experienced by the holder of this office.[18] On one occasion Lusase himself offered to let me into the *akokoto* (the enclosure where the skulls of dead chiefs were kept) for the payment of five or ten escudos (1s. 3d. or 2s. 6d.) although the entry of anybody except the chief and possibly certain of his courtiers appears traditionally to have been forbidden under the penalty of death sent by the spirits. Even the surviving rites are confined to the chief's village; the first-fruits ceremony in which the whole chiefdom was involved disappeared a number of years ago. The association general in Umbundu country between the chiefs and paganism does not provide an added ritual sanction to the chief's power, but rather links him with what is felt to be a dying past, essentially unimportant, at the present day.

The chief may also have some of his time occupied with hearing cases. A good many minor disputes are solved by local adjudication, but there seems to be no specific division between cases that ought to come to the chief and those which can be arbitrated by somebody else. Elders from outside a chiefdom may be invited to adjudicate on a particular case. The old formality of legal procedure has largely disappeared, probably because all disputes at a local level can be carried to the post—hence any ruling by chief or elders is essentially dependent on its acceptance by the disputants.

Accusations of sorcery are rather different from other cases since the post does not believe them, although such an accusation is not in itself punishable. Sometimes suspected sorcerers are accused at the post of 'poisoning'.[19] Lusase told me that convicted sorcerers were fined a chicken, a goat and a pig. Gregorio, the chief of Menga, at first said, when I asked about this, that it was not possible to know who was a sorcerer. When, rather to his surprise, I mentioned the traditional basket test, he agreed and explained that people convicted by this test were sent as labourers to the post to satisfy whatever demand was being made for workers.

[18] Informants. See also Hastings, p. 49.

[19] Childs, p. 58.

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chapter I have indicated that the position of headman is today a somewhat shadowy one, and that the headman emerges rather than succeeds by virtue of various grounds; the main ones being official recognition, some tie to the local chief, the presence of a core of one's kinsmen, a claim to be the first resident, and personality. During my stay Sapapula was as much a headman of Epalanga as anyone can reasonably be these days, yet his position had not always gone unchallenged.

In 1954 he had found himself in danger of being displaced by his matrilateral 'brother' Mwehombo. Both men, apparently, claimed that they had founded the village, both had substantial cores of kinsfolk in the village, and both possessed strong personalities. Sapapula by holding the ministerial title of Epalanga to Kafelo had had a stronger position in village affairs. This prop to his power was taken away when Kafelo was deposed from the chiefdom, and Luanga and Mwehombo purchased the title of Epalanga from Lusase.

In this partnership Mwehombo must have been the leading personality, Luanga being extremely amiable but not at all domineering or energetic. Mwehombo's idea was presumably to establish himself as recognized headman of Epalanga, and to obtain whatever advantages were to be gained from an association with Lusase. Luanga's aim, from what he told me, was to escape contract labour by having a position as a traditional headman and title-holder. Titles will still be sought after, although the substance of power has gone, so long as they can confer some prestige or protection from administrative labour demands. It was not customary for the role of Epalanga to be held by two people jointly.

Mwehombo died shortly after this. He had been baptized by the name of Simon when dying on January 13th 1955, when his social personality began its posthumous career. At the inquest, which was held according to the old Umbundu pattern in which the corpse suspended in a hammock from a pole held by two men was supposed to answer questions by the way it swung, it was found that Mwehombo had suffered the proverbial fate of the sorcerer in being killed by the spirit he had used to kill others.

The role of the questioner was taken by Paulo, sister's son to

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Mwehombo, and elder of the school, a post he would certainly have lost had this come to the ears of the missionaries. Attitudes to the verdict are interesting. Sapapula assured me that Mwehombo had killed many people by sorcery both sons and sisters' sons; Luanga did not see the contradiction which I pointed out to him of his saying both that Mwehombo was good and that he had practised sorcery; Gonçalve, Mwehombo's son, appeared sceptical of the verdict, as did Aspirante, Sapapula's sister's son who was married to a daughter of Mwehombo's half-brother, Wayangu.

The verdict did not prevent Mwehombo having an impressive funeral. He was buried according to his wishes in the traditional hammock placed in the circular grave, instead of the modern coffin placed in the modern oblong grave. As a caravan-leader he was buried by the track to Chicunda at the point where the path to Epalanga branched off. A low thatched covering was erected over his grave with the horns of the beast killed at the funeral on it. In 1956 Gonçalve and Pedro Nendi, son of Mbati and therefore a cross-cousin of Mwehombo, replaced this by a concrete memorial in the form of a cross with the base inscribed in Portuguese 'Simon Mwehombo Native of Gumba Great Man died 13th January 1955.'

Thus Mwehombo had twice undergone conversion from pagan to Christian, once as he lay dying and once after death. His posthumous conviction for sorcery affected neither the form of funeral, nor the continued residence of his kin in the village. His conviction for sorcery was a reflection of the social strains in which he had been involved, not the opening of another cycle of conflict. The kinship cores are not segments opposing one another as in a lineage system; they possess no clearly defined boundaries[10] or continuing existence in time. Their existence is dependent on the persons around whom the cores have formed, and on their deaths they lack any integrating principles. Mwehombo dead, his kinsfolk mostly found no objection in continuing to live in the village where his rival now lived as undisputed traditional headman.

There is no word in Umbundu for these groupings. The

[10] For example I have included Joaõ in the Mwehombo-Mbati kinship core, on the basis of association, but he came to the village through a tie with Sapapula.

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unambiguous approval, though there is a certain undertone suggesting cunning in the verb *oku lunguka* (to be shrewd) used about prosperous people. The old suspicion of sorcery attaching to people who were more successful farmers than their neighbours[6] seems to have disappeared. While a prosperous villager would be expected to lend money to a poorer kinsman (provided the latter was not known as a bad debtor) yet, the situation which occurs in other parts of Africa, where, as Dr. V. W. Turner notes of the Mwinilunga Ndembu, prosperous Africans 'find themselves increasingly embarrassed by the demands of their kin for presents in cash and kind'[7], would not arise among the Ovimbundu, who would regard such demands as being unjustified, even outrageous.

Wealthy Ovimbundu may spend some of their wealth on clothing and on drink. Cattle-buying has been noted as a form of capital investment and the same term may be used of small stock buying. Another way of disposing of money is by building a house of bricks with the assistance of a bricklayer. A plough may be, but rarely is, bought by two men joining together to pool their money. Generally speaking, the agricultural technology of the Ovimbundu has been little changed since 1911 except for the spread of the techniques of coffee-growing.

It has been noted earlier that the Ovimbundu play an important part in the economic life of Angola both as cultivators and labourers. In this chapter an attempt has been made to show how at the local level it is the cultivation of cash crops, rather than migration for wage labour, which incorporates villagers into the commercial economy of modern Angola. The main source of money in rural areas is the trader's store, which is also the main recipient of money, apart from the administration. While trade both between Ovimbundu and between Ovimbundu and other tribes survives on a minor scale, the social institutions associated with the rubber trade, the large caravans, the non-repayable loans within the matrilineal group, and the obligations of wealthy traders to assist their kin, have disappeared. The contemporary social structure with the

[6] Childs, pp. 106–8.

[7] V. W. Turner, op. cit., p. 135.

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wife of a 'lost' labour migrant the tie with the brother or other kinsman will be more important, though the degree to which there is contact between the two households will vary.

It would seem that the present significance of the brother-sister tie is due to the frequency and likelihood of husbands being away from villages as labourers. The strength of this tie gives added significance to the mother's brother—sister's son tie.

A sister's son traditionally inherited his mother's brother's movable property, and during his lifetime might borrow from him without need of repayment. Against this, the mother's brother had the right to sell his sister's son as a slave and it was he who was considered most likely, both traditionally and at the present day, to practise sorcery against his sister's son. My informants were divided as to whether the sister's son can practise sorcery against his mother's brother. However, it was stated by Hastings[20] and by my informants that sorcery was only practised between matrilineal kin. It is not easy to see how in the past the relationship between a man and his mother's brothers operated—to what extent a man had particular expectations and obligations to one particular mother's brother rather than to the whole set of senior matrilineal kin.

At the present time the content of the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son seems very fluid, depending on age and personal compatibility. An important difference arises between one's attitude to 'mother's brothers' and to 'fathers'. There is no strong tie with one's mother's own brother, as there is with one's own father; on the other hand, a boy whose father has died is regarded as much more likely to go to the house of a classificatory mother's brother than to the house of a classificatory father, although, as has been noted, children and adolescents may settle with kin of other categories.

Traditionally the relationship between a man and his wife's brother was distant and reserved, the two men being forbidden to eat together or joke. Nowadays the relations between a man and his wife's full or half brother are often very friendly; quite often when one finds two households close together they turn out to belong to men related in this way.

A brother-in-law is not regarded as a kinsman—he does not

[20] Hastings, p. 87.

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6. *Descent, Inheritance and Succession*

There is little interest in genealogical detail among contemporary Ovimbundu, which is not surprising since there exists no system of descent groups in which the position of the individual may be genealogically defined nor does affiliation to a particular line of descent give status *vis-à-vis* people of less eminent descent. Pedigrees are traced (in either line) for only two to four ascending generations though one man I met could name ancestors for nine ascending generations.

Despite this vagueness and lack of interest in the articulation of relationships, Ovimbundu will say that such-and-such a kinsman is 'close' and such-and-such is 'distant' even though they cannot fit this into a genealogical framework. 'Closeness' and 'nearness' are not simply used to refer to geographical proximity or social co-operation, since there may be much mutual assistance between kinsmen who are 'distant'. One might speak of a blurred edge of kinship not clearly defined in categories of kin but not non-kinsmen. A man may speak of somebody on this 'blurred edge' thus: 'He must be a kinsman but I don't know how.' Similarly the *vakwatjisoko*[1] are a class of people who are not definitely kin, and not non-kin.

There is little formalized distinction between patrikin and matrikin. There is a certain matrilateral pull in the choice of residence, a man being, as has been noted, more likely to settle with a mother's brother than with a 'father'. I had the impression that a man is more likely to settle with a matrilateral 'brother' than with a patrilateral one, but it would be very difficult to establish this by quantitative methods owing to the complexity of the factors affecting residence. As a man tends to settle where he has a number of kin rather than in the shelter of one particular kinsman, this trend does not lead to the formation of matrilineal clusters of kin. The majority of informants still consider that sorcery can only be practised among matrilineal kin but for various reasons it may be said that the fear of sorcery is not significant in kinship relations.[2]

[2] It may be suggested that the disappearance of the matrilineal groups which imposed a co-operation involving exacting demands has been paralleled by the decline of sorcery, the mystical reflection of underlying tensions. How is the fact that several informants told me that sorcery had declined since the days of the

[1] [ie., funeral friends -- Analyst]

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Inheritance of movable goods was traditionally entirely matrilineal. Today informants are confused as to what ought to be done. Inquiry about particular cases will reveal that often no movable property was left by the deceased, it having been used to pay for such expenses of the illness and funeral as the purchase of medicines and the buying of animals to be slaughtered at the feasts.

Where there is movable property, the transmission of it to the heirs is carried out in a rather informalized way, as so often happens in Umbundu social activities. The actual division of property is undertaken by a kinsman of the deceased. This should apparently be the most senior kinsman. It may be a cross-cousin or 'brother' or a sister's son.[29] How it is decided who is the senior kinsman, and who are fitted to participate in the share-out is not very clear. Nor does it seem that there is any effective device against the sharer-out giving himself the lion's share, except the general pressures and reciprocities of kinship. The principle accepted in the share-out is that inheritance should be a reflection of the relations which existed with the dead man, and also be a reward of funeral services. Nothing is kept for kin who are away working, and a son who did not keep in contact with his father would be omitted from the share-out.

By inheritance a man can increase his small stock of possessions. He is unlikely to receive anything much in the way of money, and since there is no land shortage, and, as yet, little in the way of valuable immovable property such as brick

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rubber trade to be reconciled with the statement by Childs that fear of sorcery was increasing (Childs pp. 57–58)? I suggest that the final disintegration of the old kinship groups may have been marked by particularly sharp social tensions, but that once these groups were in fact dissolved and a new form of social relations established the fear of sorcery may have declined. It should also be remembered that as indicated in Chapter V the present-day economic values of the Ovimbundu do not lead to expectations that a prosperous individual will share his wealth with poorer kinsmen, as was the case in the time of the rubber trade. Hence accusations of sorcery based on disappointed expectations of generosity are unlikely to arise.

Another aspect of the question which cannot be explored here in detail is the lack of agreement on the causality of classes of happenings or individual events. Thus one informant will say that a woman's pains in childbirth are due to sorcerers among her kin, another will say that they are caused by God (as we would say, are natural).

[29] Hambly, pp. 199–200.

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Epalanga. Told what had happened, he said that he would keep out of it, and that he had advised Guilherme to live elsewhere. In the afternoon of the same day, as heavy rain was falling, a number of people ran up and bounded on to my veranda. These included Anna, another girl (I think a sister of hers) both rather frightened, Simbwyikoka, Luciano, Paulo and some others. Anna said that Simbwyikoka was a sorcerer[3] and would kill her, and sooner than be killed by sorcery she would jump in the river. Simbwyikoka and Luciano had come to Epalanga to try and recover the 250 escudos which had been paid over in bridewealth. The catechist tried to intervene saying 'The catechist is the chief[4] of everybody in the village', but nobody paid any attention to him. Eventually, as the girl continued to threaten to jump in the river, I contributed 200 escudos, and so those involved left satisfied.

Early the following day I heard that Guilherme had returned from the post with two policemen to arrest various people. Those arrested were Sapapula, his cross-cousins Epalata (5), and Wasuka, and the latter's son Kuseka, Kasosi, Paulo, Pedro the catechist, Bartolomeu (32), Paulo's assistant in school matters, and his son Eugenio. Eugenio and Kuseka were arrested for not paying taxes and their fathers were arrested presumably for their supposed responsibility. Epalata was arrested for a similar alleged offence on the part of one of his sons, who was away as a labourer.

When I came to Guilherme's house a lengthy wrangle was going on from which I select some themes. Guilherme denied that he had planned to burn the catechetical school, the anthropologist's house, and his own house. (These charges were almost certainly invented.)

Paulo said that he had baptized a dying son of Guilherme, who, despite this, had not shown him any respect. He also denied that he had committed adultery with Guilherme's wife. (This would in any case be most unlikely owing to Paulo's blindness, resulting from an eye disease.)

Sapapula declared angrily: 'I gave Guilherme land here but

[3] This accusation was regarded simply as the product of fear and nothing more was heard of it.

[4] He used the word applied to chiefs of Ganda and other sub-chiefdoms.

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person, it is likely that the details will be re-organised to gain his attention and support.

It is also notable that Sapapula was ready to accept Justino's right to hold a case on the matter. The acceptance and even readiness (as appears later) on Sapapula's part that Justino should hear cases is partly again a result of the lack of any legal machinery on the village level, partly an aspect of the 'patron-client' situation which has so often marked 'civilized'-native relations in Angola. No doubt much in Justino's behaviour arose from the taste he showed at times for settling cases, which led to a certain number of local cases being referred to him, and his readiness to settle them may not have been particularly common among *assimilados*.

Much of the actual case consisted of accusations and counter-accusations between Sapapula and Kapapelo with other people intervening. There is a kind of attempt to establish a balance of wrongs, Kusumula claiming that Sapapula was always picking on him when there was a call for labour from the post, Kapapelo accusing Sapapula of inciting Jaime to kill him and Sapapula's sister's son Saviel of planning to seduce his wife. Sapapula had accused Kusumula and Kapapelo of trying to break the village. Lusase intervened rather against Kusumula and Kapapelo, who was his 'brother'. As previously, the demands of the post for labour are regarded as being used by their local executants in a discriminating way.

On the evening of the same day, as I was calling round the village, I found Kapapelo at the door of Sapapula's kitchen. Apparently he had arrived drunk and had threatened to kill himself. Sapapula was greatly enraged at this, as were his women folk, Nahoka, his wife, Wumba, his daughter, and Nayangu, his 'sister', who vigorously abused Kapapelo. They warned Sapapula not to accept food from Kapapelo, lest the latter use it as a means of sorcery. Kapapelo complained that Nahoka had called him a slave thus expanding the hint contained in her previous enigmatic remark that Kapapelo was not a man of the country.

On the next day, Wednesday the 22nd, Sapapula had intended to go again to Justino's to settle his case with Kapapelo, but there was a funeral to which a large number of people went.